

Thank you for the opportunity to express my concerns about any further changes to the Amateur Radio license requirements.

During the past 10+ years we have seen numerous changes to the Amateur license requirements and to the license structure. In each instance it has been to "simplify" or to reduce the knowledge and skills necessary to earn an Amateur license. The trend attempts to continue now with a string of petitions seeking to eliminate the Morse proficiency requirement. In my opinion the license requirements have been reduced far enough, if not too far already. Attaining the highest class of license is now within reach of the average 5th grader. Let's be honest, the written exams are mostly a joke since all the exact questions and answers have been simplified and are available for viewing. And the Morse proficiency exam has already been reduced to a level that puts it within reach of anyone who chooses to put forth a minimal effort to learn a valuable skill. How much further should we "dumbdown" the Amateur license requirements and for what purpose ?

As an experienced high frequency (HF) radio operator, please let me state that communication via Morse code has yet to be beat for its reliability, efficiency, and simplicity of required equipment. It is not at all obsolete when it comes to reliable long haul communication on HF. If we wish to maintain a trained pool of truly skilled radio operators that can communicate under adverse propagation conditions, then Morse proficiency should be retained as a license requirement.

If we wish to continue the trend to reduce the skills and knowledge required to attain licensure, then I would say we are heading towards nothing better than Citizens Band and this is a sad time for Amateur Radio and the role it was to serve.

If Amateur Radio goes codeless, will this be the last "dumbdown" ?  
The dumbdown to end all dumbdowns ?  
I doubt it.

The lazy people will soon be clamoring for less theory, then no theory, then "one license class fits all", then no sub-bands for digital operations, then what?

Perhaps a free codeless/theoryless license in every box of Cracker Jax.

The Amateur service is at a fork in the road on a slippery slope. My hope is to see significant and meaningful license requirements retained for licensure so that the Amateur service will be comprised of skilled, knowledgeable, and effective radio operators. I do believe that Morse is a communication mode that is unique in its effectiveness for reliable HF communication and should therefore be retained as a skill requirement for HF licensure.

Respectfully submitted,

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